



Abraham Galloway

Image: Bill Reaves, *Strength Through Struggle*

When, in November 1867, Canby called for a new constitutional convention, approximately 10 percent of whites were disfranchised by Congress because of previous Confederate service, and other whites, disgusted with Reconstruction

approximately 90 percent of black voters could be counted upon to vote according to League dictates. A stringent organization with secret codes and initiation practices, the League did not tolerate dissension and carried out several of its many threats of violence against both black and white members. Additionally, the League formed, equipped, and drilled militia companies, creating much distress within the white communities where they held public parades. The Union League flourished for a while in North Carolina but disappeared by 1870 under the immense pressures exerted by the Ku Klux Klan during Holden's governorship. For more information on Holden and the Union League, see Walter Fleming, ed., "Union League Documents" in *Documents Relating to Reconstruction* (Morgantown, West Virginia, 1904); Edgar E. Folk and Bynum Shaw, *W.W. Holden, A Political Biography* (John Blair, Publisher: Winston-Salem, 1982) 203-204; Horace Raper, *William W. Holden: North Carolina's Political Enigma* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1985), 95; William C. Harris, *William Woods Holden: Firebrand of North Carolina Politics* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 223; Trelease, *White Terror*, 225; Hamilton, *Reconstruction*, 158, 244, 328-342; Evans, *Ballots and Fence Rails*, 86; Cecelski, "Abraham Galloway," 58.

practices, failed to register to vote for delegates to the new convention.<sup>72</sup> Therefore, blacks, eager to exercise their new voting rights, registered in great numbers, and the resulting convention delegation featured 107 Republicans, 15 of whom were black, including Abraham Galloway of New Hanover, James H. Harris of Wake, and James W. Hood of Cumberland.<sup>73</sup> Also elected to serve in the delegation were a handful of relocated northerners, most notably Albion Tourgee, who worked themselves into prominent positions within the conventions, serving as

<sup>72</sup> Before the election, Canby ordered all municipal offices in Wilmington closed on May 1, 1867. A new set of officers were appointed by the military authority with Mayor J. H. Neff, a native white Republican, presiding over a board containing three blacks, William Teller, G. H. Jackson, G. W. Price; native white Republicans James Wilson, Silas Martin; and carpetbaggers E. R. Brink, L. G. Estes. The appointed commissioners ruled for less than two months before a new election in July 1868 placed Republican carpetbaggers and scalawags in office. Bryant Whitlock Ruark, "Some Phases of Reconstruction in Wilmington and the County of New Hanover," *Historical Papers of the Trinity College Historical Society*, (Durham, 1915), 98-99; Hamilton, *Reconstruction*, 252.

<sup>73</sup> Other representatives from New Hanover to the 1868 Constitutional Convention were Joseph C. Abbott and Samuel S. Ashley. New Hanover's Republican delegates and 1868 legislative candidates were repeatedly maligned by the Conservative Party. Most of the derogatory comments were based on observations that the men had never paid taxes in Wilmington, where the minority white population owned the majority of the wealth. Blacks joined the Republican Party because it was seen as their only option – to ally with the party that elected Lincoln and gave them their freedom. Seventy-three percent of Wilmington's black electorate turned out to vote. Blacks comprised 63 percent of the total electorate at the time of the 1868 election. Review of the election returns statewide showed Wilmington to be one of nineteen counties that had a black voting majority. Cheney, 845-46; Hamilton, *Reconstruction*, 285; Evans, *Ballots and Fence Rails*, 96; Ruark, "Some Phases of Reconstruction," 109; Haley, *Charles N. Hunter*, 15.